

# News story: Completion of Longbridge accommodation for Royal Centre for Defence Medicine staff

The ceremony to open the new mess, known as the Glenart Castle Mess, was attended by the military's Acting Surgeon General, Major General Martin Bricknell.

Service personnel at the RCDM, based at the nearby Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, provide care for the public and members of the armed forces returning from active duty around the world. They will be living in the new 6 storey building in Longbridge, which contains 180 ensuite bedrooms together with a dining room, gym and secure parking for military staff.

The work has been conducted for the MOD's Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and Surgeon General's Headquarters by national developer St. Modwen, and forms part of the ongoing £1 billion redevelopment of the former MG Rover site in south-west Birmingham.

Sinead McGoldrick, DIO's Project Manager, said:

We're delighted to have completed the new accommodation for the military medics serving at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine. These purpose built facilities will be a comfortable home-from-home during their posting to the hospital and will contribute to a positive work-life balance.

Major General Martin Bricknell, Acting Surgeon General, said:

The ribbon cutting marks an important step in the relationship between the Defence Medical Services and the City of Birmingham. The ceremony has been an opportunity to recognise some the key contributions which have made this project possible, with St Modwen, DIO and the military working together to create a new home for RCDM personnel.

Colonel Katherine Richardson, RCDM's Commanding Officer, said:

The new accommodation at Longbridge, named the Glenart Castle Mess, provides excellent facilities for RCDM personnel. With all 3 Services and all ranks living under one roof, the mess will further enhance unit cohesion and community, an important part of being in the military.

Flying Officer Niall Dowse in one of the new bedrooms provided for military medics at Longbridge. Crown Copyright MOD 2017. All rights reserved.

Mark Batchelor, Senior Construction Manager at St. Modwen said:

The decision to choose Longbridge for this incredible facility and the investment from DIO is testament to the success of the ongoing regeneration. We very much welcome DIO and the fantastic accommodation they have provided to help improve the lives of people working in incredibly serious and stressful situations.

We are soon to commence pedestrian footpaths and cycle links from The RCDM across the River Rae and under the A38 into Austin Park and the town centre, making for a more accessible and environmentally friendly community.

The opening of Glenart Castle Mess follows the announcement that St. Modwen was granted planning permission for a £20 million leisure scheme at Longbridge.

St. Modwen has been regenerating the former MG factory site since 2003, investing more than £300 million into the area, creating more than 4,000 new jobs.

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## **Press release: Foreign Secretary meeting with Richard Ratcliffe**

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson held a positive meeting with Richard Ratcliffe today to discuss Iran's continued imprisonment of his wife Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe.

The Foreign Secretary updated Mr Ratcliffe on the FC0's efforts on behalf of his wife, and said that the British Ambassador in Iran had once again raised the case with the Iranians this morning and urged:

- Consular access
- Appropriate medical treatment
- A decision on Richard Ratcliffe's visa application
- Access for Richard Ratcliffe to see his wife if a visit does go ahead

They discussed Mr Ratcliffe's recent suggestion of diplomatic protection. The Foreign Secretary and officials outlined that the key question is whether diplomatic protection will have a positive impact on the case, given all the representations that have already been made. They agreed that lawyers should

meet in the coming fortnight to discuss it further.

They also talked about the Foreign Secretary's plan to visit Iran before the end of the year and Richard Ratcliffe's request to accompany him on that visit. The Foreign Secretary said that our overriding principle in handling this case is to secure a permanent family reunion, not a temporary one. Any decision must be guided by that principle.

The Foreign Secretary concluded the meeting by saying that no stone would be left unturned in the case of Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe, and that of our other dual nationals detained in Iran.

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## **Press release: Significant milestone reached on Newhaven flood defence project**

These works will reduce flood risk to 244 homes, 88 commercial properties and vital infrastructure.

The Newhaven flood alleviation scheme has been developed in partnership with Lewes District Council, East Sussex County Council, the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and South East LEP. Construction work started on 3 January 2017 following consultation with the local community.

JacksonHyder are designing and building the scheme. Construction has initially focussed on the west bank of the River Ouse, where defences will protect mainly residential properties. Work here has varied from minor measures to plug gaps in existing defences, to sizable sections of new concrete flood wall and earth embankment.

This has included:

- Building a 150-metre-long bund north of Cantell's Boatyard.
- Building a 130-metre wall built along the edge of the footpath either side of Denton Island Bridge.
- Realigning and raising the flood defence bund at the rear of Huggett's Green, plus constructing various concrete walls in this area for seating and to support a new floodgate.
- Building a 140-metre-long reinforced concrete wall which runs from near the Swing Bridge to just north of the Ark Pub with access to fishermen's jetties.
- Raising 20 metres of flood defence bund in West Quay.

With just a few finishing touches to be done on the west bank, focus now shifts to the east bank. Work here has recently started, and the whole scheme

is expected to be completed by 2019. Once finished, it will reduce flood risk to approximately 430 homes and 390 commercial properties and vital infrastructure, as well as bringing significant economic benefits to the coastal East Sussex town.

The whole scheme will cost around £18 million, with the majority of funding coming from government in the form of Flood and Coastal Risk Management Grant in Aid (GIA). The 'Coast to Capital' and 'South East' Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), are each contributing £1.5 million as part of their wider commitment to the regeneration of Newhaven. This partnership approach will both significantly reduce flood risk to the local community, and provide confidence for developers to contribute to the regeneration of Newhaven.

In December 2013 the south coast of England was hit by a storm surge coming down from the North Sea. The storm saw hurricane-force winds and the highest tide in some places for almost 60 years. The tidal surge in the Newhaven area badly affected between 50 and 60 properties in the Railway Road area, as well as closing the railway line between Lewes and Seaford.

Gordon Wilson, Environment Agency Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager, said:

I am delighted that works have been completed on the west bank at Newhaven, and that residents and businesses will now benefit from a significantly reduced flood risk. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Newhaven community for their support and encouragement throughout the construction period and ask for their continued forbearance, as there will inevitably be some disruption whilst this essential work is completed.

When the flood alleviation scheme is completed in 2019, it will reduce the tidal flood risk to hundreds of homes and a significant number of commercial properties in the area, as well as protecting important local infrastructure such as the road network, railway tracks and the train station. We believe that it will also contribute to the wider regeneration of Newhaven, helping to bring new investment, jobs and homes to the town, and the surrounding area.

Jonathan Sharrock, Chief Executive at Coast to Capital, said:

With the impact of adverse weather being felt across the world and the UK, improving flood defence resilience is of huge importance. We are thrilled to have contributed to a project which will not only protect the economic, social and environmental assets of Newhaven but will also have a direct impact on enhancing regional growth.

Councillor Isabelle Linington, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environmental Impact, said:

I am very pleased that work is now completed on the west bank which takes us one step further to completion of this scheme that is so vital for local residents, businesses and community.

Further information on the scheme is available by calling 03708 506506, by emailing [newhavenfas@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:newhavenfas@environment-agency.gov.uk) or by writing to:

SSD Enquiries,  
Environment Agency,  
Guildbourne House,  
Chatsworth Road,  
Worthing,  
BN11 1LD

[Check you are at risk of flooding](#) for information on how to prepare for flooding and the latest flood warnings in your area or ring Floodline on 0345 9881188.

For all media enquiries please contact 0800 141 2743 or email [southeastpressoffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:southeastpressoffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk).

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## **[News story: November 2017 labour market statistics for Scotland](#)**

Commenting on today's labour market statistics for Scotland, Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

It is encouraging to see Scotland's employment remaining close to record highs seen earlier in the year.

However, the slight rise in unemployment is disappointing and shows there can be no complacency as we tackle Scotland's economic challenges.

With growth in Scotland continuing to lag behind the rest of the UK, I urge the Scottish Government to use their considerable economic levers more effectively.

The statistics can be accessed on the ONS website.

## Further information

- Employment in Scotland increased by 2,000 over the quarter, and increased by 46,000 over the year to stand at 2,652,000.
- The Scots employment rate remained unchanged over the quarter to stand at 75.2 per cent. The rate remains at near record highs and is just above the UK average of 75.0 per cent.
- Unemployment in Scotland increased by 2,000 over the quarter and is down 20,000 over the year. The level now stands at 109,000.
- At 4.0 per cent, the Scots unemployment rate is below that for the UK as a whole.
- Economic Activity increased by 4,000 over the quarter and now stands at 2,761,000. The Economic Activity rate increased over the quarter to stand at 78.4 per cent.
- In October 2017, the number of people out of work and claiming out-of-work benefit – Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit (UC) – was 77,000, down 1,800 over the month. The claimant count level is now 900 higher compared to one year ago.

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## [News story: Zimbabwe and the political situation in Harare: November 2017](#)

Information for British nationals in Zimbabwe on where to find guidance following recent developments in Harare.

Due to the uncertain political situation in Harare, including reports of unusual military activity, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office recommend British nationals currently in Harare to remain safely at home or in their accommodation until the situation becomes clearer.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

We are monitoring this situation very closely and our embassy is providing support and advice to UK nationals in Zimbabwe. At the moment it’s very fluid and it’s hard to say exactly how this will turn out. Everybody wants to see a stable and successful Zimbabwe. We are appealing for everyone to refrain from violence, that is the crucial thing.

We will also share information on the embassy social media accounts:

Simon Thomas, Deputy Head of the UK Mission in Harare, said:

The team at the British Embassy in Harare are obviously following the developments that are unfolding here in Zimbabwe very closely. You'll have seen pictures overnight of military being deployed around the city, and I can confirm that military remain deployed at strategic locations around Harare this morning.

As an embassy, our prime concern is obviously for the safety and security of British nationals, and our advice to any British nationals who are here in Harare, either living, or working or visiting, is to stay at home, stay in your hotel room, wait until things settle down a little bit.

Follow the [travel advice](#) and the general advice that we're putting out on the embassy's social media channels [@UKandZimbabwe \(Twitter\)](#) and [@UKandZimbabwe \(Facebook\)](#). We'll be updating them regularly throughout the day.

[Deputy Head of Mission Simon Thomas update](#)